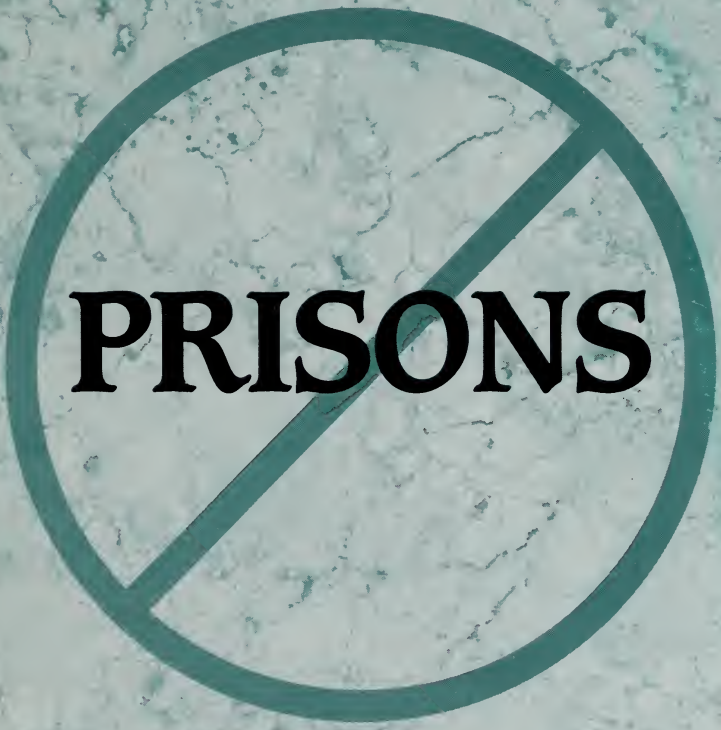

Shut Them All Down!

Evangelist
Ted R. Weiland

PRISONS

SHUT THEM ALL DOWN!

Evangelist
Ted R. Weiland

PUBLISHING INFORMATION

First Printing: April 2000

Published by:
Mission to Israel Ministries
P.O. Box 248
Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363
United States of America

All rights reserved

ISBN 0-9679392-2-4

PRISONS

SHUT THEM ALL DOWN!

America's Penal System

Since 1973 only Russia and Rwanda have had more people in prisons or jails than the United States of America. Wilmot Robertson, author of *The Dispossessed Majority*, commented on this national disgrace:

> **The U.S. has a higher proportion of its population in jail than any other country – 178 per 100,000, as against Japan's 89 per 100,000 and Britain's 65.**[1]

In 1993 the national average, including those in local jails, had risen to 531 prison inmates per 100,000 Americans, and in 1997 it had climbed to 645. Do these statistics testify to the fact that America has too many laws or too many criminals or too many prisons? The answer is: *All three!*

In 1990 in a speech to the National Association of Pretrial Service Agencies, Donald Lay, Chief Judge of the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals for the states of Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas, rendered a verdict that the United States' "criminal justice system is a disgrace ... and a complete failure." This is true if for no other reason than prison internment rates have *never* lowered crime rates.

PRISONS

Today, a law-abiding citizen has a greater chance of being victimized by a violent criminal than he does of being injured in a traffic accident. With a ninety-five percent chance of never doing any jail time, criminals have very little to lose. A serious crime committed in America will cost the perpetrator an average of 8.5 days in prison. Four out of five federal and state prison inmates are repeat offenders. With these facts in mind, someone might inquire whether our current prison system should be rightfully called a *penal* system?

Do not be fooled, today's prison system is accurately identified as a penal system. While this system does very little in penalizing criminals, it does penalize the victims of crime. America's prison system initially punishes the victims by not providing satisfactory justice or restitution for the crimes committed. It likewise falls far short of providing sufficient protection from repeat offenders. Victims and their relatives are further punished by the government forcing them to pay for the housing, feeding, clothing and entertainment of the criminals who murdered, raped or plundered them.

Under the current "justice" system, the taxpayer foots the bill for the crimes of criminals. For example, Nebraska's state and federal prisons combined held 3,287 inmates as of December 1996. It costs $16,659 to maintain one inmate in a Nebraska prison for one year. This is a total of 54 million, 758 thousand, 133 dollars per year to house, feed and clothe Nebraska's prisoners.

The taxpaying citizens of Nebraska, and every other state, are paying twofold for criminals. We not only pay when we become the victims of their crimes, but we also pay nearly $55,000,000

annually to keep them in prison while they watch television, play games or molest one another. Even when a fine is levied against a criminal, it is most often awarded to the government, not the victim or the victim's next of kin. Such a *system* is better described as a *racket*.

There are additional problems associated with America's prison system. For example, non-violent criminals are often housed with hardened, violent criminals. The result of such policy is a fulfillment of the principle cited by the Apostle Paul:

> Do not be deceived: "**Bad company corrupts good morals**." (1 Corinthians 15:33 NASV*)

Place a non-violent criminal in confinement with a violent criminal, and the violent criminal is not going to be converted to the non-violent criminal's lifestyle. Instead, the non-violent criminal is much more likely to become hardened and violent. America's prisons are simply fertile training grounds for further and compounded criminal behavior. More often than not, the non-violent criminals become physical and sexual victims of the hardened lifers.

In no stretch of anyone's imagination have America's prisons proven to be institutions of rehabilitation. An extremely rare exception does not make America's current penal system a viable choice for crime control in a civilized society.

Wilmot Robertson summed up two of America's prison system's primary problems:

---

* All scripture is quoted from the King James Version unless otherwise noted.

- **Long prison sentences cause immeasurable psychological damage to inmates by wasting their lives away in useless and profitless pursuits, while the soaring costs of prison upkeep place a heavy financial penalty on those who observe the law.**[2]

Moreover, many of America's prisons are nothing more than slave labor camps. In many prisons the inmates are employed at slave labor wages, anywhere from $0.22 to $1.10 an hour. Prisoners are "employed" making boxes, stickers, license plates, mattresses, canned goods, textiles, road signs, etc., all to be sold on the open market. Their employer, the Federal Government, doing business as UNICOR (the trade name for Federal Prison Industries, Incorporated), does not pay social security, unemployment, workmen's compensation, health insurance, pensions, or holiday and vacation pay. They also do not have to pay income tax on their profits.

Someone is likely to respond: "So what! Why shouldn't such criminals be used in this fashion? Why should they deserve decent wages in light of their crimes?" This is precisely how the Federal Government wants you to think about it. The arrangement between UNICOR and the prisons is just another means by which private enterprise is being destroyed in America. The average private businessman is unable to fairly compete on the open market against such a setup.

Yahweh's Penal System

These and other examples identify the many problems inherent in America's present "penal" system. The question is: What *is*

to be done with today's criminals? The "get tough on crime" conservatives promote "lock them up and throw away the key" legislation, whereas the "tenderhearted" liberals maintain a "criminals are not to blame" mentality. As a means of crime control, the conservatives advocate warehousing prisoners until the convicted criminal's time is up. On the other hand, the liberals perceive that people commit crimes because they did not have the proper education or upbringing, they were poor or they were discriminated against. According to the bleeding-heart liberals, such disadvantaged people should not be incarcerated at all or should have reduced prison or jail sentences.

An editor of the Scottsbluff, Nebraska *Star Herald* suggested that Nebraskans have a limited number of options when it comes to solving their prison problems:

> Nebraskans have only three options: **build more prisons, send fewer people to prison or release inmates more quickly**.[3]

However, are these viable options for anyone who is genuinely interested in solving Nebraska's or America's crime problems? It might surprise you, but Christians should choose to implement option number two – send fewer people to prison. In fact, rather than sending any criminals to prison, Yahweh's* blueprint for crime control should be resurrected. A study of the Old Testament reveals that Yahweh made no provision for prisons or jails, except for briefly holding criminals over for speedy trials and sentencing:

---

* Yahweh is the personal Hebrew name of the God of the Bible.[4]

> ...the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of Yahweh,* and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses: ...And **they put him in ward** [jail], **that the mind of Yahweh might be shewed them**. (Leviticus 24:11-12)

> ...while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. ...And **they** [Moses and Aaron] **put him in ward** [jail], **because it was not declared what should be done to him**. (Numbers 15:32-34)

After sentencing, judgment was carried out immediately. Under such an expedient system, prisons are unnecessary. In capital cases the criminal is put to death and in non-capital cases he is compelled to make restitution. But what if a criminal refuses to pay restitution? What is to be done with him then? Yahweh has the perfect solution for someone who refuses to obey court orders. Refusal to make restitution is contempt of court, and contempt of court is a capital offense:

> If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within thy gates: then shalt thou arise, and get thee up into the place which Yahweh thy God shall choose; and thou shalt come unto the priests the Levites, and unto the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment

---

* Where the Tetragrammaton "YHWH" (the four Hebrew characters that represent the personal name of God) has been incorrectly rendered as "the LORD" or "GOD" in scripture, the author has taken the liberty to correct those passages and insert "Yahweh."[4]

> [according to the law of Yahweh]: and thou shalt do according to the sentence ... and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee: according to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee, and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do: thou shalt not decline from the sentence which they shall shew thee, to the right hand, nor to the left. And **the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before Yahweh thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die**: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel. And all the people shall hear, and fear, and do no more presumptuously. (Deuteronomy 17:8-13)

Under this statute any rational person would choose to make restitution. Yahweh's penal system is flawless. As a result *only the criminal* pays for his crimes. In capital cases, which include murder, rape, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, kidnapping, witchcraft, idolatry and blasphemy, the perpetrator is to be put to death.[5] In other words, the only prison cell such felons are entitled to is a coffin. In non-capital cases, such as theft, the perpetrator is required to pay restitution, anywhere from two to five times the estimated value of what was stolen:

> **If a man shall steal an ox** [another man's means of livelihood], **or a sheep** [another man's subsistence], **and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep**.... **If the theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double**.... **If a man shall deliver unto his neighbour money or stuff to**

> **keep, and it be stolen out of the man's house; if the thief be found, let him pay double**. If the thief be not found, then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges, to see whether he have put his hand unto his neighbour's goods. For all manner of trespass, whether it be for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, or for any manner of lost thing, which another challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; and **whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour**. (Exodus 22:1-9)

If a person acquires property or money by a false report, lying, deceit or extortion, he is to make full restitution plus an additional fifth part of its value:

> If a soul sin ... and lie unto his neighbour in that which was delivered him to keep, or in fellowship, or in a thing taken away by violence, or hath deceived his neighbour; or have found that which was lost, and lieth concerning it, and sweareth falsely ... then it shall be, because he ... is guilty, that **he shall restore that which he took ... he shall even restore it in the principal, and shall add the fifth part more thereto, and give it unto him to whom it appertaineth**.... (Leviticus 6:2-5)

If a convicted thief is financially incapable of making restitution, he is to be sold into servitude until his debt is paid:

> ...**if he** [the thief] **have nothing** [with which to make restitution], **then he shall be sold for his theft**. (Exodus 22:3)

Forcing a criminal to work and then garnishing his wages until his debt is paid would also fulfill this judgment. In either case, a capital or non-capital criminal is *not* imprisoned, the victim is *not* further victimized and the taxpayer is *not* additionally burdened. Instead, the criminal learns that, indeed, *crime does not pay!*

Scripture also clearly mandates two or more corroborating witnesses to any crime and that perjurers suffer the same fate as the accused would suffer:

> **One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin** ... **at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong**; then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before Yahweh, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquisition: and, behold, **if the witness be a false witness** ... **then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother**: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you. And those which remain shall hear, and fear, and shall henceforth commit no more any such evil among you. **And thine eye shall not pity; but life shall go for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot**. (Deuteronomy 19:15-21)

Reinstate these two statutes and America's unethical appellate system would be unnecessary. Under Yahweh's penal structure

it would be highly improbable that someone would be punished for a crime he did not commit.

Babylon's Penal System

Wilmot Robertson elaborated upon the origin of our present-day prison system:

> **Humanitarianism, which is the extension of familial love to all mankind, was the chief architect of the present-day prison system**. ...The herding of large numbers of men into vast prison complexes is a relatively new development in criminology.[6]

Prisons are a man-made substitute for Yahweh's penal system, promoted by those who think it is more humane to imprison a capital criminal than to put him to death. No one who knows what truly goes on behind prison bars would ever describe incarceration as an act of humanitarianism. King Solomon aptly described the consequences of such misguided compassion:

> ...**the compassion of the wicked** [people who either break or reject Yahweh's laws] **is cruel**.
> (Proverbs 12:10 NASV)

Humanitarianism, which is often nothing more than an extension of humanism, that is, the creation of one's own laws and morality, was indeed the architect of America's present-day prison system. However, this same system can be traced back to an ancient culture that continues to have a profound influence upon modern American culture. Incarceration, as it is

found today in America, did not come from Yahweh but from Babylon and other non-Israelite nations:

> **Now this is the copy of the letter that the king Artaxerxes** [of Babylon] **gave unto Ezra the** [Levitical] **priest**.... **Artaxerxes, king of kings, unto Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of heaven**.... **I make a decree**, that ... thou, Ezra, after the wisdom of thy God ... set magistrates and judges, which may judge all the people that are beyond the [Euphrates] river, all such as know the laws of thy God; and teach ye them that know them not. And **whosoever will not do the law of thy God, and the law of** [Artaxerxes] **the king, let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be** unto death, or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or **to imprisonment**. (Ezra 7:11-26)

This is the only time in the Bible where incarceration is recommended as a form of punishment.* However, the text states that this edict was not issued *by Yahweh* but rather *by Artaxerxes, King of Babylon.* Artaxerxes' decree intermixed God's system with man's system. Man's methodology is generally the consequence of humanism as was Artaxerxes' leavened decree. The Prophet Habakkuk described the consequences resulting from humanism's influence:

> ...**the law** [of Yahweh] **is ignored and justice is never upheld**. **For the wicked surround the righteous; therefore, justice comes out perverted**. (Habakkuk 1:4)

---

* Some people consider the Old Testament cities of refuge a type of imprisonment when in fact they were a way by which the innocent were protected. This safekeeping is indicated in the term "cities of *refuge*." – Numbers 35:10-28.

PRISONS

When, as a people, we refuse to obey Yahweh's commandments, statutes and judgments, Yahweh warns us that He will allow others (humanists), whose "*justice and authority originate in themselves*," to rule over us. (Habakkuk 1:5-7)

It is time for Americans to return to Yahweh and His law, including Yahweh's penal system. Yahweh's program for crime control is perfect. Why substitute it with man's fallible policies that allow criminals to get away with "murder" and which make law-abiding citizens suffer and unlawful government to prosper?

Today's liberals declare that education is the answer. Indeed, education in Yahweh's law! The conservatives say that we have too much crime and not enough punishment. Precisely, not enough of Yahweh's judgments! The liberals say send fewer criminals to prison. By all means, let's send none! Conservatives proclaim that dangerous criminals should be kept off the streets for an appropriate period of time. So be it, let's keep them off the streets forever!

Man's answer to crime is: *Build more prisons!* Yahweh's answer to crime is: *Shut them all down!*[7]

Source Notes

1. Wilmot Robertson, The Dispossessed Majority (Cape Canaveral, Florida: Howard Allen Enterprises, 1972) p. 425.

The Dispossessed Majority may be ordered from *Mission to Israel Ministries*, PO Box 248, Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363. A $12.00 donation is suggested.

2. Robertson, p. 426.

3. Lynn Monson (editor) "Seeking solutions to prison crowding," Star Herald (Scottsbluff, NE: Star Herald Publishing Co., Inc., April 20, 1993) p. 4B.

4. For a fuller explanation concerning the use of the sacred names of God, *The 3rd Commandment* may be ordered on five 60-minute cassette tapes from *Mission to Israel Ministries*, PO Box 248, Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363. A $15.00 donation is suggested, or these tapes may be obtained on a listen-and-return basis.

5. *Capital Punishment: Deterrent or Catalyst?* may be ordered from *Mission to Israel Ministries*, PO Box 248, Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363. A $4.00 donation is suggested.

6. Robertson, pp. 425-426.

7. *Shut Them All Down!* may be ordered on a 60-minute cassette tape from *Mission to Israel Ministries*, PO Box 248, Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363. A $4.00 donation is suggested, or it may be obtained on a listen-and-return basis.

About the Author

Ted R. Weiland pastors Christian Covenant Fellowship in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, and is the evangelistic head of Mission to Israel Ministries. He has a national and international audio tape ministry, is a columnist for *The Jubilee*, a national Christian newspaper in California, and he lectures frequently throughout the United States. He also appears as a guest speaker on television and radio programs. He and his wife have four children.

He was reared in Colorado, and after graduating from high school, he hit the Professional Rodeo Circuit, focusing on the rough stock events, particularly bull riding. Upon his conversion to Christ in 1975, he "hung up his spurs" in exchange for a Bible and dedicated his life to the study of the Scriptures and to preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ.

During 1975-1978, he attended Christian Leadership Bible College in Denver, Colorado. In 1984, he was nominated one of 1983's Outstanding Young Men of America for his professional achievement and exceptional service while serving four years as an evangelist and youth leader at a church in Aurora, Colorado.

Pastor Weiland is the author of the nationally and internationally acclaimed *God's Covenant People: Yesterday, Today and Forever*. He has also written *Spiritual Israel: Out of All Nations or Out of National Israel?*; *Christian Duty Under Corrupt Government: A Revolutionary Commentary on Romans 13:1-7*; *The Phinehas Hoods: A Biblical Examination of Unscriptural Vigilantism*; *Eve, Did She or Didn't She? The Seedline Hypothesis Under Scrutiny;* and *Capital Punishment: Deterrent or Catalyst?*

Mission to Israel
Ted R. Weiland, *Missionary*
P.O. Box 248
Scottsbluff, Nebraska 69363
www.missiontoisrael.org